Historic Trail Map of the Denver 1°×2° Quadrangle, Central Colorado

By Glenn R. Scott 1999

INTRODUCTION

olorado contains the equivalent of 14 areas the size of the Denver quadrangle, and each area contains about 7,200 square miles. The Denver quadrangle contains all or parts of 14 counties, named here with their dates of founding:

> Gilpin 1861 Arapahoe 1855 Grand 1874 Boulder 1859 Jefferson 1861 Clear Creek 1859 Park 1861 Denver 1902 Teller 1899 Douglas 1859 Elbert 1874

The eastern part of the Denver quadrangle was originally in Arapahoe County, which was the western end of Kansas Territory. The western part of the Denver quadrangle west of the Continental Divide was in Utah Territory. According to Brown (1976, p. 13), Kansas Territorial Legislature established Arapahoe County in 1855, but then abolished it in 1861 and divided that area into five new counties: Montana, El Paso, Oro, Broderick, and Fremont, designations that lasted only a short time. After Jefferson Territory was informally established in 1859, the people in that new territory no longer needed to obey the directives from Kansas Territory. The formal Colorado Territory was established on February 28, 1861, and area had started in 1858 when gold was first discovered. The first problem that faced the gold-seekers was how to get into the mountains where the gold was. At that time there were no wagon trails, and access was even difficult for walkers because of the bouldery or drowned valley bottoms.

HISTORIC TRAILS AND WAGON ROADS

any of the historic trails in the Denver quadrangle were used by Indians long before the white man reached the area. The earliest recorded use of the trails by white men in the Denver quadrangle was in the 1830's to 1850's for trade with the Indians. More intensive use of the trails began after 1858 when roads were built into the mountains from the new settlement of Denver. Discovery of gold in the Rocky Mountains in central Colorado in 1858 led to the surveying and establishment of several new trails from the east to the future site of Denver, thence to the newly discovered gold fields in the nearby Front Range. These trails included (1) the Overland Trail (a branch from the Oregon Trail), which ran southward along the southeast side of the South Platte River from Julesburg and Greeley to Denver, and (2) the southern part of the Fort Morgan Cutoff, which as a bypass of the Overland Trail went essentially straight southwestward from Fort Morgan to Denver, thus saving nearly 40 miles of travel. Coming in from Kansas across the dry plains of eastern Colorado were the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Road and the Smoky Hill North, Smoky Hill Middle (Starvation Trail), and the Smoky Hill South Trails. Trending north-south on the east side of the mountains was the Cherokee Trail that branched off from the Santa Fe Trail at La Junta, Colorado, and went up the Arkansas River, then followed Fountain Creek up to Colorado City, and on through Denver to Virginia Dale near the Wyoming border. The Trappers Trail, which came northward from Taos, New Mexico, was nearly coincidental with the Cherokee Trail through the Denver quadrangle. Stage lines and stations were established on the Overland Trail, the Fort Morgan Cutoff, the

Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Road, and the three Smoky Hill routes. When the trails were built, an effort was made to choose level routes; however, very little grading was done, so the horses, mules, or oxen were constantly traveling down into valleys and back up the other side or were fording streams. Diaries of the travelers give accounts of the stages turning over when traversing slopes along valleys. The stages traveled as rapidly as the drivers could get the horses or mules to run. Teams were changed about every 10-15 miles at stations where extra stock were kept in order to provide rested and vigorous animals that could maintain the schedules. These stations were called "swing" stations but they provided little comfort to the passengers, as stops were only long enough to provide for the changing of the teams. About every fourth station was equipped with a kitchen and dining room so that the passengers could eat meals three times a day. These stations were called "home" stations. Some of them had beds, but generally the stages did not stop for

the night and the passengers had to sleep on the coaches as they traveled through the night. Because of the sparseness of trees along the stage routes, many of the stations were simply dugouts

along the banks of streams or into the sides of hills. Some stations were made of adobe or rarely of logs or lumber. Part of the profit for the stage companies came from the transport of mail and freight. The stage contractors had to bid for the privilege of carrying the mail, and the competition along some stage lines was very keen, even though the profit was somewhat meager. Although the stage routes were established by the mail contractors to haul mail and passengers, the routes were also used by freighters, immigrants, and gold seekers. During most of the time the trails were used, travel was hazardous for several reasons. The best known reason was that the Indians were antagonized by the intrusion of the white settlers into their native lands; therefore, the Indians tried to discourage settlement. The Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Utes were particularly troublesome in the Denver quadrangle. Treaties between the tribes and the government were agreed to, but were not kept by either the Indians or the white intruders. In the early years (1858–1863) when there were few travelers into Colorado, there was much less trouble than in the later years (1864–1869) when travel increased. The trouble escalated when the military attempted to prevent the Indians from harassing the travelers along the stage lines. Retaliation by the Indians became most active after the Sand Creek massacre on November 29, 1864, at a big bend of Big Sandy Creek in Cheyenne or Kiowa County, about 12 miles southeast of Kit Carson. Travel along all of the stage lines into Colorado was slowed or curtailed for several months after the massacre (Scott, 1975). To protect the travelers along the stage routes, the U.S. ent fortified and stationed troops at some of the existing stage stations. New forts that were garrisoned with other small troops of cavalry were also set up along some of the trails. Travelers were forced to travel in groups, and the cavalry controlled the number of wagons in each traveling group and provided escorts to assure their safety from Indian attacks. A systematic effort to kill off the bison on the plains and thus deprive the Indians of their main food supply probably accomplished more than any other method to stop the depredations of the

Indians and force them into submission and onto reservations.

FAR WEST STAGELINE NOTICE TO PASSENGERS

Adherence to the following rules will insure a pleasant trip for all: 1. Abstinence from liquor is requested, but if you must drink, share the bottle. To do otherwise makes you appear selfish and un-neighborly.

2. If ladies are present, Gentlemen are urged to forego smoking cigars and pipes as the odor of same is repugnant to the Gentle Sex. Chewing tobacco is permitted, but spit W I T H the wind, not against it. 3. Gentlemen must refrain from the use of rough language in the presence of Ladies and Children.

4. Buffalo robes are provided for your comfort during cold weather. Hogging robes will not be tolerated and the offender will be made to ride with the Driver. 5. Don't snore loudly while sleeping or use your fellow passenger's shoulder for a pillow; he (or she) may not understand and friction may result. 6. Firearms may be kept on your person for use in emergencies. Do not fire them for pleasure or shoot at wild animals as the sound riles the horses. 7. In the event of runaway horses, remain calm. Leaping from the coach in panic will leave you injured, at the mercy of the elements, hostile Indians and hungry

8. Forbidden topics of discussion are Stagecoach robberies and Indian uprisings. 9. Gents guilty of unchivalrous behavior toward Lady Passengers will be put off the Stage. It's a long walk back. A word to the Wise is sufficient.

HINTS FOR PLAINS TRAVELERS In 1877, the Omaha Herald published "Hints for Plains Travelers.

The best seat inside a stagecoach is the one next to the driver...with back to the horses, which with some people, produces...seasickness, but in a long journey this will wear off, and you will get...less than half the bumps and jars than on any other seat. When any old "sly Eph," who traveled thousands of miles on coaches, offers through sympathy to exchange his back or middle seat with you, don't do it. Never ride in cold weather with tight boots or shoes, nor close-fitting gloves. Bathe your feet before starting in cold water and wear loose overshoes and gloves two or three sizes too large.

your chances; if you jump, nine times out of ten you will be hurt. In very cold weather, abstain entirely from liquor while on the road; a man will freeze twice as quick while under its influence. Don't growl at food at stations; stage companies generally provide the best they can get. Don't keep the stage waiting; many a virtuous man has lost his Don't smoke a strong pipe inside especially early in the morning. Spit on the leeward side of the coach. If you have anything to take in a bottle, pass it around; a

When the driver asks you to get off and walk, do it without grumbling. He will not request it unless absolutely necessary. If a team runs away, sit still and take

Don't swear, nor lop over on your neighbor when sleeping. Don't ask how far it is to the next station until you get there. Never attempt to fire a gun or pistol while on the road, it may frighten the team; and the careless handling and cocking of the weapon makes nervous people nervous. Don't discuss politics or religion, nor point out places on the road where horrible 🚁 murders have been committed. Don't linger too long at the pewter wash basin at the station. Don't grease your hair 🐇 🐔 before starting or dust will stick there in sufficient quantities to make a respectable 'tater' patch. Tie a silk handkerchief around your neck to keep out dust and prevent sunburns...A little glycerine is good in case of

man who drinks by himself in such a case is lost to all human feeling. Provide stimulants before starting; ranch whiskey is not always nectar.

Don't imagine for a moment you are going on a picnic; expect annoyance, discomfort and 🛧 some hardships. If you are disappointed, thank heaven.

Pikes Peak Express Road and the Smoky Hill routes was hazardous because of the lack of water and game. The only source of water was from scarce springs, ephemeral water holes, and a few ephemeral streams. For example, in the summer of 1859 when the stage along the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Road was operating, the Republican River in eastern Colorado held only a few water holes. Even the Big Sandy Creek was ephemeral and dried up. The shortage of game resulted from the early travelers eliminating the game or driving it away; thus, later travelers had difficulty in procuring meat. Along the Smoky Hill routes, many people died of thirst or starvation during the summers or froze to death during the

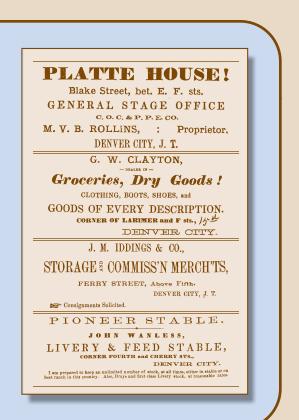
An example of the hazards to be met along a mountain stage road was given by Paul D. Harrison, Sr. (written communication, 1995), who described the route from Golden Gate to Blackhawk: "The route from Denver to Central [City] entered Golden Gate, an embryo village at the mouth of that Canyon several miles northwest of Golden City. Then came a long eight-mile pull to the top of Guy Hill, with the following descent into Guy Gulch steep and tortuous. Heavy wagons were eased down the hill by means of a snubbing post and tackle. Stage drivers largely ignored this method in favor of an arrangement of rough-locking the hind wheels of the coaches. From Guy Gulch was another long, stiff grade up to the Junction Ranch, thence southward up to the Smith Hill Divide. Here commenced another sharp descent of two miles from the divide into Clear Creek Canon, then followed two miles of easy road up the canon to Black Hawk."

The post roads and toll roads listed in the text pamphlet and shown on the historic trail maps were built quickly and had very rough surfaces compared to the paved and unpaved roads prepared today. Very little effort was given to make the

UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

ven if the Indian Tribes had been peaceful, travel along the Leavenworth and early roads level, hence wagons were forced to climb or descend very steep slopes and to ford streams. Many types of vehicles used the roads, ranging from huge freight wagons to Conestoga wagons and small delivery wagons. Passenger vehicles also varied considerably in size from large stage coaches, to surreys, buggies, open spring wagons, or even hand carts such as were used by the Mormons during their immigration to Utah. Travel on the roads must have been very difficult after strong rains or heavy snowfall. On mountain roads, heavy snowfalls generally shut down the passage of both mail and passenger traffic. In this publication the actual routes of travel of stages from one point to another can be ascertained by reference to the lists of Post Roads which list the most-used routes of

Westward movement and settlement of whites was encouraged by the Homestead Act of 1862. Many persons displaced by the Civil War moved onto the newly opened land even though the Indians were still a potential threat. After the General Land Office completed the land surveys in about 1870, many of the Indians had already moved out of the area. Much of the land became safe for settlement and small towns sprang up, generally spaced no more than 10 miles apart—the distance a team and wagon could travel to town and back in a day. Roads were built to connect the new communities and to provide access to the major trails. Finally, railroads were built westward across the Colorado plains to connect Denver and the



Geologic Investigations Series

Pamphlet accompanies map

I-2639 (Sheet 1 of 2)

Prepared in cooperation with

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Western History and

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LINCOLN & JEFFERSON TOLL ROAD CO.

Belmont (Dwyer Spur) Boreas Pass (Hamilton Pass, Breckenridge Pass,-Tarryall Pass pre-1885) DENVER, BRADFORD, & BLUE RIVER ROAD CO SOUTH PARK, BLUE RIVER, & MIDDLE PARK WAGON ROAD CO. BRECKENRIDGE, BUCKSKIN JOE & HAMILTON — WAGON ROAD CO.; HAMILTON & MONTGOMERY SOUTH PARK. ALMA. &

Transverse Mercator projection, zone 13.

INDIAN TRIBES

and tendons for bow strings.

arrow. Such sites have been found southeast of Denver.

central and north zones

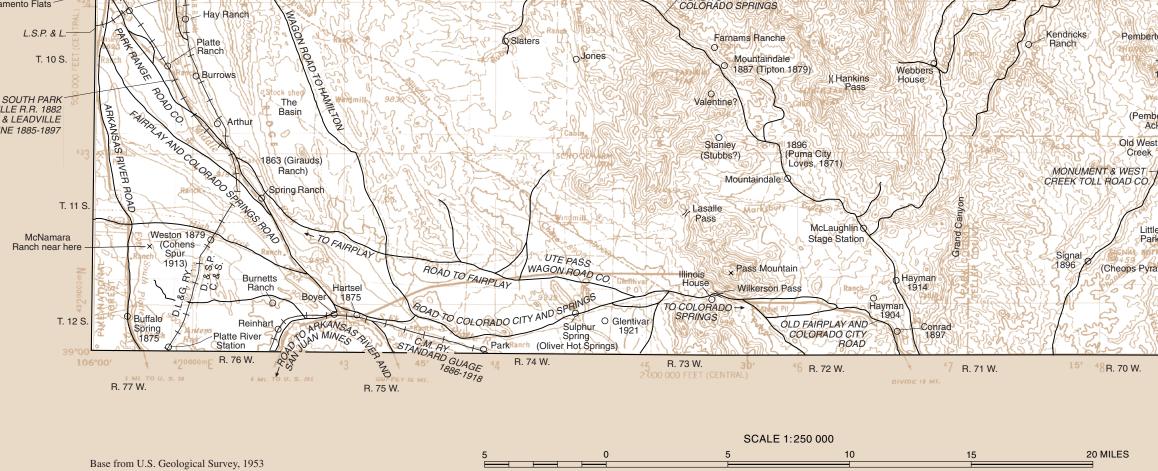
100,000-foot grid based on Colorado coordinate system,

ntil about 200 years ago, Indians were the only people

living on the Great Plains and in the Rocky

Concord stagecoach "No 7 US Mail," the "Cripple Creek stage," drawn by a team of six horses in the high country of SOUTH PARK & LEADVILLE SHORT LINE 1885-1897 Teller County, Colorado. Between 1890 and 1910. (L.C. McClure, MCC-3157)

travel in the Denver quadrangle. mountain communities with the east.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 200 FEET

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOURS AT 100-FOOT INTERVALS

1978 MAGNETIC DECLINATION FROM TRUE NORTH VARIES

FROM 13°EASTERLY FOR THE CENTER OF THE WEST EDGE TO 12° EASTERLY

FOR THE CENTER OF THE EAST EDGE

HISTORIC TRAILS IN THIS AREA ARE SHOWN

ON ENLARGED MAP ON SHEET 2

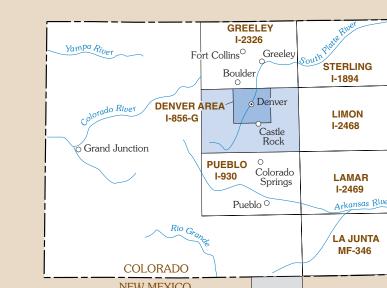
Rock Ridge 1874

Nine Mile House, & Stage Station (Sand Creek Station)

s City 1923 Sand Creek Junction 1916 (Lyman 1884)

SAND CREEK WAGON & TOLL ROAD CO.

CADILLAC & LAKE CITY RY. 1980-1990? R. 60 W.



Index Map Showing Location of the
Denver Quadrangle (Blue)

RATON AND
SPRINGER
I-1641

and other Published Historic Trail Maps

Denver Quadrangle (Blue)

shown on original source. Locally, parts of the early trails are adjusted to better fit modern courses of streams. Trails date from 1850's to 1880's. Abbreviation used: TOWN OR OTHER CULTURAL FEATURE—Approximately located; showing approximate date of founding of a town or establishment of a post office, not

generally the date of the first person to arrive; alternate town names and dates are in parentheses. Most newer town names are in brown. Locations of towns shown on previously published maps vary widely, and some locations shown here may be inaccurate. Abbreviation used: P.O. = Post Office TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURE OR HISTORIC SITE

EXPLANATION

Dates of use shown for some roads. Routes plotted from General Land Office (GLO)

land plats, early maps, or aerial photographs. Most trail or road names are from

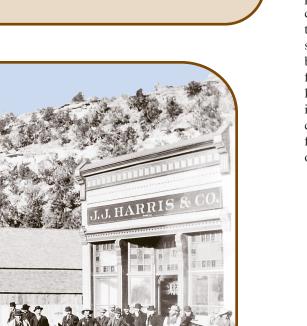
original sources such as land plats. Some shorter trails and trail segments on the

GLO land plats were omitted here to avoid cluttering the map excessively. Some

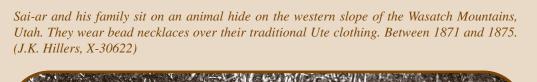
trails are terminated or their continuation is queried where their destination was not

— TRAIL OR ROAD—Dashed where approximately located; queried where inferred.

- RAILROAD—Date shows beginning or duration of operation. Currently operating pamphlet text. For more details about railroads, see books about railroads listed in the "Sources of Information" ----- CATTLE TRAIL

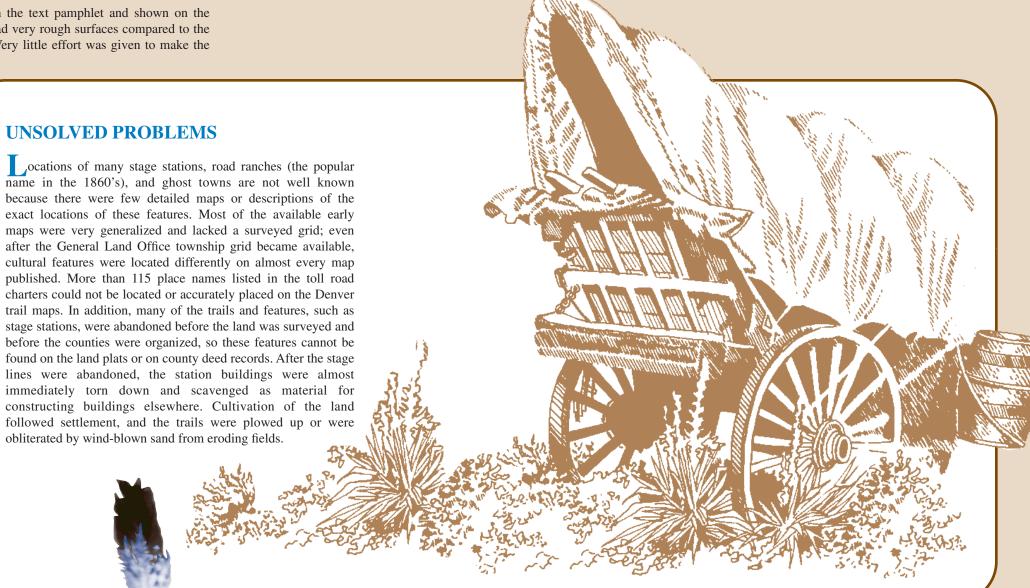


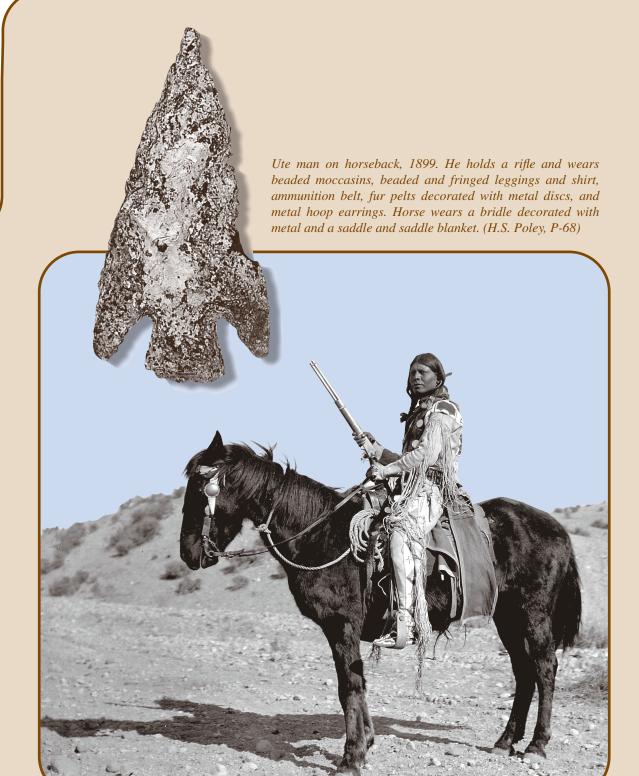
Loaded stagecoaches headed for the gold fields in 1892 or 1893. This view of Dolores, in southwestern Colorado, is typical of the mountain towns in Colorado at that time. Original photograph by W.H. Jackson, reproduced by L.C. McClure in 1920-1928. (L.C. McClure, MCC-2869)





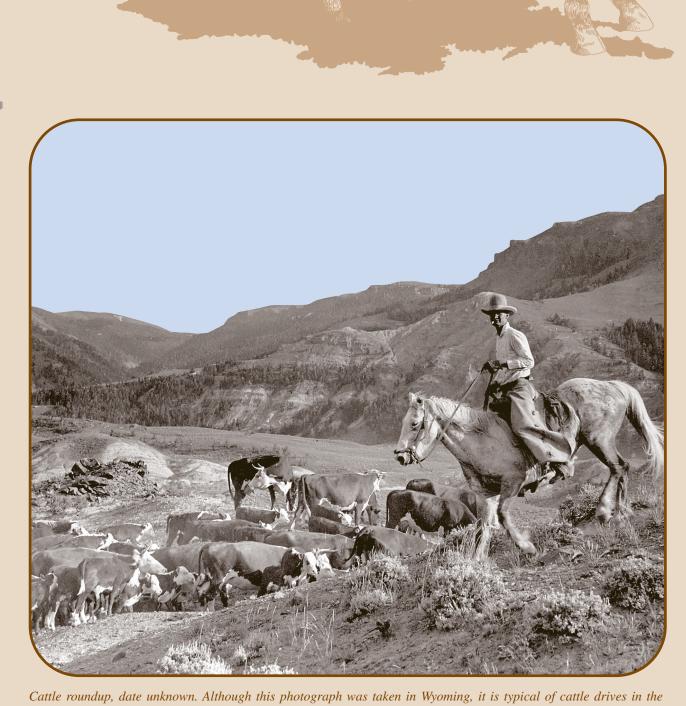
Portrait of a Ute man, his name is Negrito. He wears a hair-pipe breastplate and choker, a print shirt with metal arm bands, and an eagle feather in his hair. Between 1880 and 1900. (Nast, X-30582)







nthropologists believe that the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Ute people were descendants of the first Americans who crossed from the When the white men first came west, the Indian tribes were very friendly, but when the whites took more of the Old World to the New World during Pleistocene time a little later than 15,000 years ago. A land bridge apparently linked Asia to land, killed the buffalo, and wanted the Indians put on reservations, the Indians began to fight back. However, the America and migrants then gradually moved southward across both North America and South America and South America and their source of food was almost eliminated. They were confined to reservations, and the Indians found a great assortment of game animals, such as the Columbian mammoth, large bison, horse, camel, and grizzly bear. their ancient way of life came to an end. Some of these animals became extinct about 10,000 years ago, either because of unfavorable changes in climate or from overhunting. and the atlatl or spear thrower, which allowed the hunter to throw the spear farther than possible with his arm alone. The hunters also developed a method to stampede bison over cliffs. The bison that survived the fall could be dispatched with spears or with bow and



R. 69 W. woo

western United States. (C.J. Belden, Temp 01)

ull-length portrait of "WM. Shakspear, head Arapahoe," in 1899. He wears a feather headdress, porcupine-quill breastplate, and moccasins, and he holds a feathered shield, leader's flag, and blanket. (Rose & Hopkins, H-412)



attle have a natural tendency to gather in herds and to travel as herds to water or to pastures. This herding instinct has been used by cowboys to create huge groups of cattle for moves of many miles. Long before the U.S. cattle industry got started, the earliest drives were made by the Spanish "conquistador" Don Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1540, from Mexico to our present southwest. In 1598 Don Juan de Onate brought cattle from Chihuahua to the San Juan Indian Pueblo along the upper Rio Grande in New Mexico. America's greatest drives were along cattle trails from the home ranches in Texas to the towns and railheads in Kansas and Colorado. Some of the cattle trails in Colorado were the Goodnight Trail, the Goodnight-Loving Trail, the Loving Trail, the National Cattle Trail, the Chisholm Trail (along the Santa Fe Trail), and the Montana Cattle Trail.

The greatest herds along the trails were those of longhorn cattle in the middle and late 1800's. While at their home range, the herds required little attention, but moving them to distant markets required many cowboys and herders. Herds of 2,000 cows along the trail were common and in one year as many as 6,000 cows a day or 30,000 a month might pass a single point. Herds usually were started out of Texas in the early spring, although some started in the fall. Before the drive started, all of the longhorn cattle were branded with a distinctive road brand that would identify the drover who brought the cattle to the ultimate buyer. The brand also helped separate cattle in the herds after a stampede or if the cattle became intermixed with

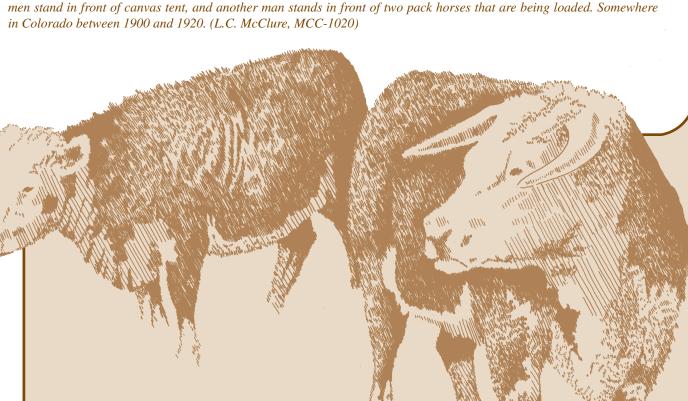
Although adventure was a great part of a drover's daily life, the job of driving cattle was tiresome, sometimes dangerous, and always hard work. During a cattle drive, each cowboy had an assigned duty and position relative to the herd. Two experienced cowboys rode at the head of the herd to guide and control the speed of the steers. Two swing riders were one third of the way back from the front, and two flank riders were another third back. The least agreeable positions were the drag riders who rode in the cloud of dust behind the herd. The drags had to keep the slow or lazy steers moving. The drives were monotonous except for occasional stampedes, meal times, and evening camps (Brayer and Brayer, 1952).



Photographs are courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department. The

photographer (where known) and Denver Public Library call number for each photograph are shown in

parentheses at the end of each caption. Arrowhead by F.C. Brunstein.



Cowboys on cattle drive ready to break camp. Man on horseback wears chaps and has a lasso attached to saddle. Three

Any use of trade names in this publication is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Geological Survey For sale by U.S. Geological Survey Information Services Box 25286, Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225 This map is also available as a PDF file at http://greenwood.cr.usgs.gov

Historical data compiled by *Glenn R. Scott* in 1995-1998 Publication design and digital layout by Carol Quesenberry Original drawings by Carol Quesenberry and **Roger Lawrence** Editing and digital cartography by F. Craig Brunstein Pamphlet text layout and digital cartography by *Denny Welp* Trail map digitizing and digital cartography by *James Chappell*

Manuscript approved for publication, March 26, 1998



